



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2008
WWW.USDOJ.GOV

CRM
(202) 514-2007
TDD (202) 514-1888

TWO MEN PLEAD GUILTY ON INTERNATIONAL SEX TOURISM CHARGES

WASHINGTON – Two men pleaded guilty today to traveling and conspiring to travel, in foreign commerce with the intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct with children, Acting Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division Matthew Friedrich and U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama Deborah J. Rhodes announced.

During the plea hearing before U.S. District Judge Kristi K. DuBose, Burgess Lee Burgess, 44, of Mobile, Ala., and Mitchell Kent Jackson, 31, of Pensacola, Fla., both admitted that they traveled to Thailand between 2000 and 2002. According to their pleas, Burgess and Jackson traveled with the intent to sexually abuse children, paid for access to children and in fact sexually abused children.

Burgess and Jackson admitted in their pleas that in preparation for their travel to Thailand, they corresponded with Wayne Nelson Corliss of New Jersey. According to plea documents, Corliss himself was in contact with another individual who was a resident of Thailand. Also according to plea documents, Burgess, Jackson, Corliss and the individual in Thailand were all members of an Internet chat group dedicated to men with a sexual interest in minor boys. The individual in Thailand invited Burgess, Jackson and Corliss to visit him in Thailand to engage in sexual acts with minor Thai boys. In addition to sexually abusing children, the plea documents state that Burgess, Jackson and Corliss photographed and videotaped the Thai boys.

Corliss was identified in May 2008 after Interpol released a photo to media outlets in the United States and abroad, and made a global appeal for information that could identify the offender depicted in the photo. The image had been cropped from photos depicting him sexually abusing young children in Southeast Asia. Within 48 hours, and acting on information obtained from individuals who recognized the offender as Corliss, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, coordinating with Interpol the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) located and arrested Corliss. He pleaded guilty on Oct. 28, 2008.

Burgess and Jackson will be sentenced on April 3, 2009. At sentencing, the men will face a maximum term of 30 years in prison. They also face the possibility of lifetime supervised release following their prison terms and a \$250,000 fine.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sean Costello of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Alabama, with assistance provided by CEOS Attorney Michael Yoon and Lee Vartan of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey. The case was investigated by Interpol and ICE.

###

08-1007